

UNIVERSITY OF  
WINCHESTER

# EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY

<b>Document Title:</b>	Exceptional Circumstances Policy
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<p>Indicate whether the document is for public access or internal access only.</p> <p>Indicate whether the document applies to collaborative provision? (<i>Strikethrough text, as appropriate</i>)</p>	<p><b>Public Access</b></p> <p><del><b>Internal Access Only</b></del></p> <p><b>Applies to Collaborative Provision</b></p>
<p><b>Summary:</b> This policy sets out the regulatory frameworks for students to notify the University and access support where exceptional circumstances beyond their control either delay or prevent them from attending scheduled assessments and/or submitting assessed work on time.</p> <p><b>Exceptional Circumstances</b> (often know as ‘ECs’) are events which are <b>sudden, unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond a student’s control</b> and which may affect a student’s performance at <b>summative assessment</b>.</p> <p>These regulations make reference to other policies, procedures and regulations which can be found here: <a href="#">Policies and Regulations - University of Winchester</a></p> <p><b>In the 2025/6 Academic Year this policy applies to all students enrolled at Levels 3 (Foundation), 4 and 5 and new Level 7 entrants in 2025/6 ONLY</b></p>	

Equality Impact Assessment	
Summary of process undertaken to determine equality impacts:	Assurance of access and inclusivity and that no principal or required procedure would place an unfair advantage or disadvantage for any person possessing, associated with or perceived to be possessing any of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act 2010.
University Committee (name/ date) where equality impacts discussed (may be Committee of approval, or another):	Academic Regulations, Policies & Procedures (ARPP) Committee and Senate
<b>Identified equality impact(s) on colleagues and students</b> (i.e. any specific impacts related to this policy that may cause disadvantage for people due to one or more particular protective characteristic)	
Protected Characteristic	Impact(s) identified and any action(s)/mitigation(s) to address these impact(s), as necessary.
Age	No impacts identified.
Disability	No impacts identified.
Gender Identity	No impacts identified.
Marriage/Civil Partnership	No impacts identified.
Pregnancy and Maternity	No impacts identified.
Race (incl. nationality)	No impacts identified.
Religion and Belief	No impacts identified.
Sex	No impacts identified.
Sexual Orientation	No impacts identified.

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## 1. Introduction and principles of Exceptional Circumstances

You are expected to meet your assessment submission deadlines and attend scheduled assessment events as defined in the **Academic Regulations** and **Assessment Regulations**.

Programmes will clearly communicate assessment deadlines and dates, which will be aligned to assessment periods within the Academic Calendar as required. All assessments must be completed within each level of study's enrolment period and any incomplete module assessments will either require **Trail Credit** or **Repeat Study** processes as defined in the **Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes**.

The University operates an '**Inclusive Assessment**' framework where all assessment expectations and requirements will be made accessible for students at the beginning of their module delivery. Further detail can be found in **Section B5** of the **Assessment Regulations**.

You have a responsibility to plan your workload to meet deadlines. The University provides academic support for you through the **Personal Academic Tutor** scheme, **Module and Programme Leaders**, the **Faculty Student Support and Success Advisor**, and the wider **Student Support and Success (SSaS)** team. It is wholly reasonable for the University to only consider and accept EC claims that are submitted and notified to the Faculty at the time of the impact of the circumstances.

If you are experiencing issues with your workload, you may opt to take advantage of the '**Graduated Penalties Scheme**', where a grade reduction of 3 marks is applied automatically for each 24 hour period, or part thereof, up to a maximum of 5 working days or 15 marks, that you submit late. Full details of the **Graduated Penalty Scheme** can be found in **Section B8** of the **Assessment Regulations**.

**Exceptional Circumstances** mitigations are designed for emergencies only. **Exceptional Circumstances** (often known as '**ECs**') are events which are sudden, unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond your control and which may affect your performance at or ability to submit by the summative assessment(s) deadline.

As EC claims are intended to cover short-term problems which are sudden and unexpected, repeated claims for the same issues or impacts may require additional review to confirm if alternative support arrangements may be in your best interests. Consequently, where you are experiencing long term impacts to your studies and may require additional support to help you continue with your studies then the University has a wide range of options and **Student Support & Success** can assist you in navigating these.

Each University assessment deadline or scheduled assessment period is covered by a 15 working day EC submission period. You must submit your EC claim no earlier than 5 working days before the assessment deadline, or scheduled assessment, and no later than 5 working days afterwards.

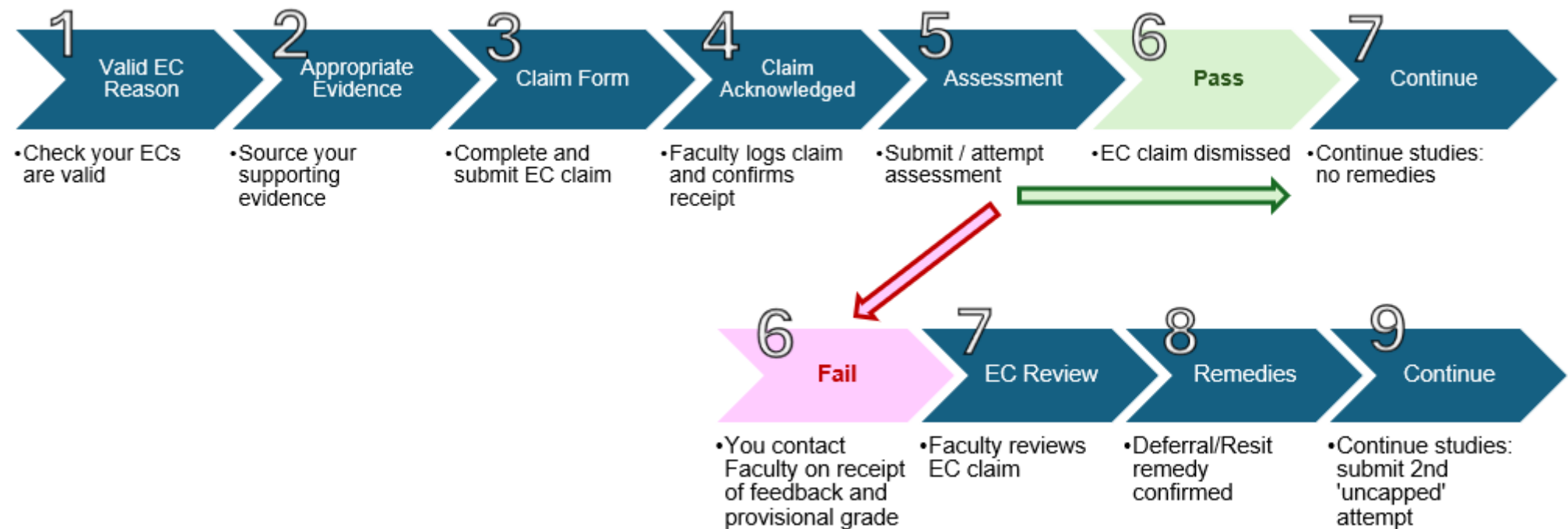
This policy sets out the details of how the University will support you if you experience **Exceptional Circumstances** that impact on your ability to complete and submit assessments by the deadline. There may be circumstances that compel the University to make exceptions to these regulations or to implement emergency changes to these regulations and you will be notified if this applies specifically to your claim or whether it applies to all students.

## 2. Quick Process Guide

### Applying for Deferral or Extension



### Applying for Concurrent Remedy



### 3. Processes for Exceptional Circumstances

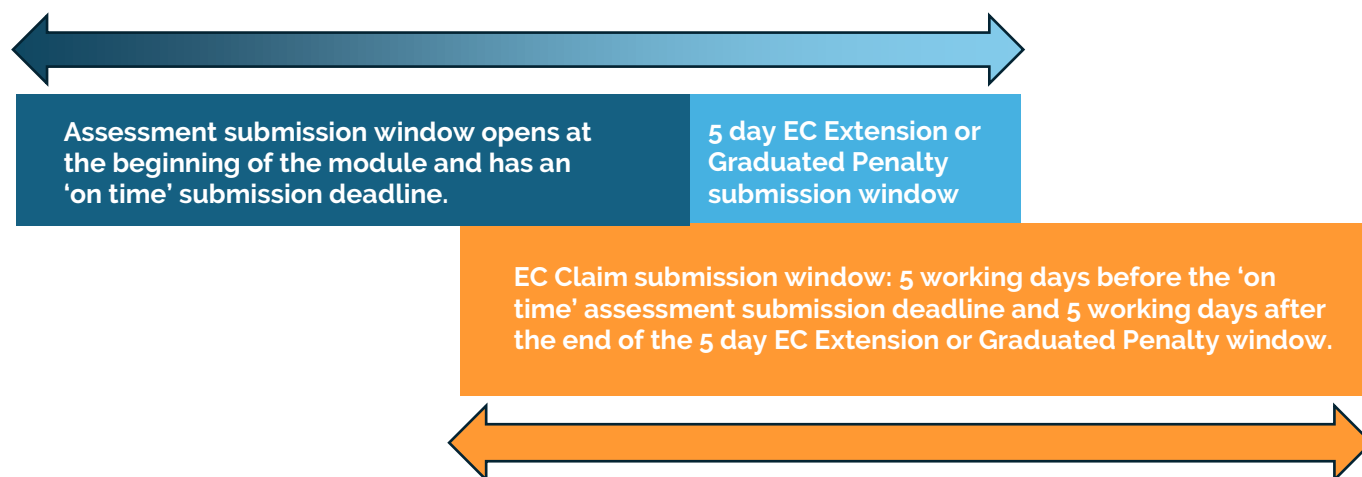
#### 3.1 Available Mitigations

The EC Claim Form will ask which type of mitigation you are requesting from a list of possible options. The type of mitigation available as per Section 5 Mitigations below, if any, is at the discretion of the University, and will take the following factors into consideration:

- Confirmation of the evidence of exceptional circumstances;
- The assessment type and the timing of the assessment;
- The requirements of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), which may not permit some forms of mitigation;
- The principle of all students being treated consistently, fairly and justly across the institution;
- Protecting the academic standards of the degrees awarded by the University.

#### 3.2 When to submit your EC claim

You must submit your claim within a 15 day submission period in order for your EC claim to be considered which extends from 5 working days before the 'on time' or original submission deadline, throughout the 5 day EC Extension or Graduated Penalty period and for 5 further working days after the final extension or Graduated Penalty deadline as shown below:



#### 3.3 The role of the Faculty

Each Faculty is responsible for assessing EC claims received from their students. If you are taking a co-validated module from another Faculty, your home Faculty will consult with the Faculty where the co-validated module is delivered.

#### 3.4 Fraudulent claims

If you fraudulently submit a claim for Exceptional Circumstances or provide false or fabricated evidence then you may be subject to **Student Disciplinary**, and where relevant, **Fitness to Practise** procedures which may ultimately lead to you being withdrawn from your course or programme. See Section 4 for details on Acceptable Grounds for Exceptional Circumstances and Section 6 for Evidence Requirements.

#### 3.5 'Working days'

Throughout this policy, deadlines are stated in 'working days'. Working days are Monday-Friday throughout the year with the exception of English Bank Holidays and University Closure Days. A working day's hours are from 9am to 5pm GMT on any given day and any and all required submissions should be received within these working hours this is to ensure that there is support available to you if you are experiencing difficulties when trying to submit your EC claim in the same way that Canvas (VLE)

submission deadline times are scheduled within the working day.

### 3.6 Exceptional Circumstances impact on other students

If you are working in a group with other students, and being assessed as a group, the EC review may consider the impact of your ECs on other students in the group, for example if the EC prevents the group from meeting the deadline or from completing the required work.

### 3.7 Assessment feedback

If you submit assessed work after the original deadline as a result of an extension, then the provisional grade and feedback release deadline, as defined in the **Assessment Regulations**, will apply from the day that work is submitted, and not from the original deadline.

### 3.8 Scheduled Assessment Opportunity

Where reference is made to a 'scheduled assessment opportunity' this means the next available time that you would be able to undertake an assessment that has a defined date and time such as an examination, presentation, placement or practical assessment.

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#### 4. Acceptable Grounds for Exceptional Circumstances

	GROUNDS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	
	Valid	Invalid
	Circumstances which will be considered:	Circumstances that will not normally be considered under the EC procedures.
<b>Bereavement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bereavement for an immediate family member</li> <li>• Bereavement for a housemate, classmate or close friend</li> <li>• Bereavement for a recognised/registered support animal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bereavement for an extended family member</li> <li>• Bereavement for a co-worker</li> <li>• Bereavement for a domestic pet</li> </ul>
<b>Short-term medical conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden and unexpected or moderate personal injury, medical condition or mental health condition that requires medical intervention and would normally lead to missing work</li> <li>• Rescheduling of major medical appointments, e.g. surgery, that you cannot change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor illnesses or injuries (such as coughs, colds, headaches) for which over the counter medication is available</li> <li>• Circumstances supported by evidence from unregistered medical practitioners, such as alternative therapists.</li> </ul>
<b>Long-term medical conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden or acute episode of an ongoing disability, medical condition or mental health condition</li> <li>• Newly diagnosed disabilities or long-term medical or mental health conditions which can only be addressed by an extension, deferral or other form of one-off mitigation</li> <li>• Circumstances where there is insufficient time to put Reasonable Adjustments in place</li> <li>• Gender confirmation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circumstances where there is sufficient time to put Reasonable Adjustments in place</li> <li>• An ongoing disability, medical condition or mental health condition that is already provided for under Learning Agreements</li> <li>• Conditions which have lasted and remained unchanged for more than 12 months for which were known and/or disclosed for which no reasonable adjustments were deemed necessary under Learning Agreement provisions.</li> <li>• Rescheduling of minor medical appointments within students' control to change</li> </ul>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden and unexpected physical or mental health complications in pregnancy or maternity</li> <li>• Pregnancy related illness that would normally lead to missing work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregnancy or maternity where there are no complications</li> <li>• Paternity, parental or adoption leave where an interruption or other adjustments have already been provisioned</li> </ul>
<b>Parenting and caring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden and unexpected injury or illness in a child, sibling, parent, spouse or partner for which you are the primary carer and are needed to support</li> <li>• Unexpected extended caring responsibilities for a child, sibling, parent, spouse, partner or other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatives with minor illnesses or injuries (such as coughs, colds, headaches etc.)</li> <li>• Day-to-day childcare</li> <li>• School holidays</li> </ul>



	<p>close relative where work is interrupted for 5 or more working days preceding the assessment deadline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A breakdown of your normal childcare arrangements for which there is insufficient time to make alternative arrangements</li> </ul>	
<b>Major incidents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden and unavoidable direct experience of a terrorist incident, war or natural disaster</li> <li>• Major fire in residence</li> <li>• Sudden and unexpected travel or other disruption caused by sudden and unavoidable event preventing attendance at a scheduled assessment</li> <li>• Minor private or public transport failure outside of control of student for which time constraints prevent sourcing alternative arrangements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missed trains, tubes or buses</li> <li>• Poor time-keeping or poor time management.</li> </ul>
<b>Crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victim of serious or violent crime</li> <li>• Victim of non-violent crime where the incident has had an unavoidable impact on assessment deadline</li> <li>• Evidence of theft of work required for assessment</li> <li>• Non-criminal investigations, particularly of allegations of sexual misconduct or harassment, where the student is the Reporting Party, Reported Party or witness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victim of petty theft e.g. mobile phone theft, bicycle theft or car break-in</li> </ul>
<b>Family and personal difficulties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic abuse</li> <li>• Family breakdown (such as divorce)</li> <li>• See above for parenting and caring responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booked holidays or other travel arrangements</li> <li>• Trips to see family abroad (except in case of bereavement)</li> <li>• General domestic/ family problems</li> <li>• Attendance at weddings or other celebration events</li> </ul>
<b>Financial difficulties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unforeseen and immediate financial problems preventing you from attending scheduled assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General day to day financial problems</li> </ul>
<b>Housing difficulties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden and unexpected housing problems preventing you from studying, e.g. having to vacate your domestic residence unexpectedly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving home</li> <li>• General housing problems</li> </ul>
<b>Work and other commitments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major schedule changes in approved professional/work commitments linked to your</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing work commitments</li> <li>• Participation in extra-curricular activities (e.g. sport)</li> </ul>

	<p>course or programme, e.g. placement learning beyond your control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major schedule changes in approved representation at a national/international event where the changes could not be foreseen</li> <li>• Changes to work commitments for critical workers (e.g. NHS staff)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time spent on job/internship applications/interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Academic work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden and unexpected impact to academic project work e.g. obtaining ethical approval, equipment failure, problems with sample collection, for which alternative remedies cannot reasonably be implemented</li> <li>• Significant failure of IT equipment or other essential digital, physical or technical resources preventing completion of assessment where no on-campus alternative is available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General exam or assessment worries</li> <li>• Religious observances that can be personally managed without risk or detriment.</li> <li>• Visa problems that are within scope of control for a student</li> <li>• Poor time-keeping or poor time management</li> <li>• Failure of personal IT equipment or other digital, physical or technical resources where these are available on campus (not applicable to distance learners)</li> <li>• Failure to back up documents</li> <li>• Complaints against staff in relation to delivery of the module/programme</li> </ul>
<b>Court appearance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jury Service</li> <li>• Attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, defendant or plaintiff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting a relative or friend at court appearance</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circumstances which are foreseeable or preventable</li> <li>• Claims that you were unaware of the dates or times of submission or assessment schedule</li> <li>• Circumstances which do not relate to the timing of the assessment period</li> <li>• Late disclosure of circumstances on the basis that you felt unable to follow the University procedures</li> <li>• Circumstances without reasonable supporting evidence</li> <li>• Circumstances supported by evidence from a relative or other person with a conflict of interest.</li> </ul>

## 5. Mitigations

The 'Mitigation Options' table below indicates the types of mitigation that are available, dependent on the assessment type, through the Exceptional Circumstances procedures. The EC claim form will ask you which type of mitigation you are requesting.

An EC claim can cover more than one assessment – you will need to make sure you specify all of the affected assessments on your claim submission.

All assessments have two defined deadlines, the original 'on time' deadline and the 5 working day extension deadline for both EC claims and Graduate Penalty Scheme late submissions. There are no further assessment submission options beyond the 5 day extension deadline and the next available submission opportunity for all assessments will be the deferral/resit submission point. Further information can be found in the **Assessment Regulations**.

**Where deferral (further attempt) mitigations are approved then the subsequent assessment attempt will be for substantive, or uncapped grades in all circumstances.**

Assessment Type	Available Mitigation
Exam (including in person and online)	<b>Deferral</b> to the next scheduled assessment opportunity
Take-home paper (including 48-hour assessments)	<b>Deferral</b> to the next scheduled assessment opportunity
Quizzes & In-class tests	<b>Deferral</b> to the next scheduled assessment opportunity
Practical exam or other in person assessment, e.g. presentations and performances	<b>Deferral</b> to the next scheduled assessment opportunity
Coursework and all other assessments submitted via the VLE	<b>Extension</b> of 5 working days with suspension of Graduated Penalty Scheme
Dissertation/final project	<b>Extension</b> of 10 working days for UG and 20 working days for PGT with suspension of Graduated Penalty Scheme.

You will also be permitted to request the following mitigations that will require Dean or Academic Registrar approval and will only be authorised where it would be in your best interests:

- **Alternative assessment** which continues to allow you to demonstrate achievement of the same learning outcomes
- **Repeat Study** in the subsequent academic year.
- **Trail Credit** in the subsequent academic year.
- **Deferral** of assessments as part of **Interruption to Study** and as a **Return to Study** requirement.
- **Transfer** to Part-Time study where possible in the curriculum

If the Exceptional Circumstances Evidence review determines that the claim does not meet the conditions of this Policy, you will be advised that your claim is unsuccessful and your assessment submission will fall under the Graduated Penalty rules for late submissions, as outlined in the **Assessment Regulations**, or you will be required to undertake your assessment at the next available opportunity and your grade capped at the pass mark percentage.

## 6. Evidence Requirements

EC claims require supporting evidence. The following requirements relate to supporting evidence:

- The evidence that you provide to support your EC claim will need to cover the full period for which you are requesting mitigation.

- Evidence that is overtly graphic (medical photographs), contains irrelevant personal data or information, where the nature and context is not appropriate or is likely to offend will not be considered and your claim will be dismissed. You should seek advice and guidance from your **Personal Academic Tutor, Faculty Office, Faculty Student Support and Success Advisor** or the **Students' Union Advice Centre** if you are unsure whether your evidence is of an appropriate nature.
- Your evidence must be from a verifiable, applicable, independent and authoritative source and be uploaded as a pdf document alongside your EC claim. Supporting evidence from relatives or other students is invalid.
- Your Evidence must be in English. Where the original evidence is not in English then you must provide the original evidence and a translation at your own cost. The University may check the accuracy of the translation.
- Where your Faculty requires additional evidence or clarification regarding your evidence in order to determine the outcome of your EC claim, then you will be required to produce this within 20 working days of being contacted. If this is not submitted your EC claim will be rejected and your late submission will be subject to Graduated Penalties or if you did not submit or attend a scheduled assessment your future assessment opportunity will be capped at the appropriate pass grade. If your additional evidence or clarification request meets the Faculty requirements then your grade will be uncapped for an existing submission or next assessment opportunity.

## 6.1 Examples of approved supporting evidence

Some examples of acceptable evidence are:

- Crime reference number
- Death certificate
- Doctor's note/Medical certificate
- Evidence from Head of Casework of ongoing investigation
- Evidence of a medical or other recognised practitioner visit for a sudden or unexpected health or wellbeing issue
- Hospital admission record
- Insurance claim documents
- Letter (or similar) from an independent professional or organisation (e.g. solicitor, faith leader, Social Worker, Citizens Advice Bureau);
- Letter (or similar) from medical professional or other relevant independent professional (e.g. therapist or counsellor), or evidence of pending appointment
- Letter from a veterinary practitioner
- Letter from registered childcare or other caring provider
- Obituary/Notification of death (website / newspaper)
- Official letter of participation in for event or equivalent, with detail of how the participation was unforeseen
- Order of funeral service
- Photograph of a prescription or medication
- Photographic evidence of property damage
- Police report
- Student Support and Success support non-disclosure notification (see Evidence in sensitive or traumatic cases below)
- Traffic report (website or newspaper)
- Official report of traffic accident
- Confirmation from a University Department, such as Student Support and Success or IT Services

## 6.2 Evidence in sensitive or traumatic cases

There may be situations where it would be distressing to disclose or share details and evidence in sensitive or traumatic cases to your Faculty.

In these circumstances you should speak to a Student Journey Co-Ordinator in Student Support and Success confidentially where your circumstances can be confirmed as being exceptional and they will provide an evidence support notification which can be submitted to the Faculty.

You will be expected to disclose relevant information for this to be considered so that they can act as your supporting evidence for the Faculty to review.

### 6.3 Late EC claim and Late evidence submissions

There may be certain exceptional reasons why you may not be able to submit either an Exceptional Circumstances Claim within the prescribed deadlines or source the supporting evidence. Examples of such exceptional reasons might include:

- A serious accident, incident, assault or critical onset of a mental or physical condition or illness where acute medical care is needed, emergency hospitalisation or other unforeseen intervention
- Detention or incarceration by police or other statutory services
- You have been informed it will take a certain period of time for your evidence to be produced, e.g. a medical certificate.

In such cases, if the deadline for submitting an Exceptional Circumstances claim has been missed, you are advised to submit an Exceptional Circumstances Claim at the earliest opportunity, stating the reasons for the late submission of your claim and providing corroborating evidence for both the exceptional circumstance and the reason for the late claim or absence of supporting evidence.

In all eventualities, evidence must be submitted no more than 30 working days after submitting your original EC claim. A decision on your claim cannot be made until evidence is received. This may affect the type of mitigation that is available where not all mitigations would be practicable or reasonable given the timing. If this applies to your claim, then you will be notified in writing of alternative mitigation options.

Exceptional Circumstances claims cannot be considered through these procedures once your formal results have been published to you subsequent to the **Progression and Award Board** letter. However, you have the right to appeal via the Appeals procedures (See Section 8 below).

## 7. Concurrent Exceptional Circumstances review processes

If you submit an Exceptional Circumstances claim as well as submitting assessed work by the original assessment deadline or attending your scheduled assessment (known as an Application for Concurrent Remedy) and subsequently achieve a pass grade then your EC claim will be set aside.

If you submit an Exceptional Circumstances claim as well as submitting assessed work or attending your scheduled assessment (concurrent EC claim and assessment submission), and subsequently achieve a fail grade then it is your responsibility to contact your Faculty requesting a review of your EC claim.

If your EC claim is upheld then either the graduated penalty will be removed (where a late submission penalty takes your grade below the pass threshold) for late submissions and/or your subsequent attempt will be uncapped whichever is most applicable and allows you to continue with your studies.

## 8. Appeals against Exceptional Circumstances Claim decision

You have the right to appeal a rejected claim on the following grounds:

- Procedural Irregularity: The University has evidentially failed to follow the requirements of this Policy in such a way that the legitimacy of the decision reached is called into question;
- Perversity of Judgement: the decision does not, in your evidenced opinion, appropriately reflect the weight of the original evidence presented.

You may not appeal:

- On the grounds that you did not understand, or were not aware of, this policy.
- In relation to the same assessment more than once by means of this process.
- Where there is no evidence that you accessed University support, either via **Student Support & Success** and/or your Faculty, e.g. **Personal Academic Tutor, Programme Leader, Module Leader** or member of the **Programme Administration** team where it would have been reasonable to expect you to do so at the time of the assessment opportunity in question.

Further information can be found in the **Appeals Regulations**

## 9. Quality Assurance and Monitoring of Exceptional Circumstances Procedures

The Academic Registrar will be responsible for the governance of Exceptional Circumstances procedures and ensure that Faculty reviewers have access to training and guidance information in order to deliver parity and consistency across the University.

An annual review of Exceptional Circumstances claims will be submitted to Senate by the Academic Registrar.

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